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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups: modalities for review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

Statement submitted by the American Association of Retired Persons, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 26 July 1996.

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The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) is pleased to have this opportunity to address the Commission for Social Development at its first session since the Second World Assembly on Ageing and as the newly appointed entity responsible for the follow-up and appraisal of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002 (see A/CONF.197/9). We look forward to participation at this session as the Commission commences discussions on how to integrate the different dimensions of population ageing in its work, in addition to discussion of modalities of reviews and appraisals at this forty-first session as stated in the Plan.

* E/CN.5/2003/1.

** The document was submitted late to the conference services without the explanation required under paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 B, by which the Assembly decided that, if a report is submitted late, the reason should be included in a footnote to the document.

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AARP commends the United Nations and the Member States in advancing the global ageing agenda through the work of the Second World Assembly on Ageing and the adopted Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 and the Political Declaration (ibid.). We also commend the regional commissions for the timely follow-up to the Assembly, and the regional implementation strategies that have been adopted thus far.

To achieve a society for all ages, AARP supports the call for sound and measurable policies on global ageing and implementation of the Plan and all regional strategies. We believe the Plan and regional strategies embody commitments and recommendations for tangible improvements for older persons, while promoting a positive portrayal of older persons within society. AARP supports the Plan and the regional strategies' commitments to protect pensions; promote economic growth and the expansion of the older labour market; improve the health and well-being of ageing populations; encourage lifelong learning; ensure full integration and participation of older people in society; and promote intergenerational approaches to tackle the challenges of ageing populations, including support for caregivers.

However, AARP is strongly disappointed in the lack of specific implementation methods, time-bound targets, and benchmarks for monitoring progress. The Second World Assembly on Ageing and the regional commissions cannot effectively execute future follow-up on the numerous constructive recommendations without clearly outlined and continuous methods for implementation, monitoring, review and appraisal.

AARP expects that the forty-first session of the Commission for Social Development will fulfil its mandate set by the Member States in the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/93). Together, the Plan and the report of the Secretary-General ask the Commission to commence discussions on integration of population ageing in its work, as well as modalities for review and appraisal of the implementation of the Plan of Action.

Increased life expectancy over the past century represents a remarkable success story; nevertheless, global ageing poses challenges. AARP believes these challenges to income security, health and long-term care programmes, are manageable. National and international cooperation can achieve success in overcoming these obstacles through means, including partnerships and strategies among Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector and forums such as these. We look forward to the establishment of the newly appointed focal points on ageing throughout the United Nations system and Member States in order to collaborate more effectively towards strengthening the outcomes of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, 2002.

AARP urges the Commission for Social Development to recognize the need and urgency for timely follow-up to the Second World Assembly, which includes specific implementation methods, monitoring and data assessment in order to advance the global ageing agenda and fulfil the recommendations adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing.